

# EXHIBIT 10

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## Stardock CEO reveals details about new *Star Control* title in development

Ars sits down with Brad Wardell and talks past, present, future, and frungy.

LEE HUTCHINSON - 1/3/2014, 6:34 AM

[Enlarge](#)

In July of last year, developer and publishing house Stardock [acquired the rights](#) to the highly celebrated but long-dormant *Star Control* franchise. The company announced plans for a new *Star Control* title that would be heavily inspired by the franchise's most famous entry, *Star Control 2*.

That set the bar mighty high. [Forum postings](#) from Stardock CEO Brad Wardell seemed to indicate that Stardock was going to produce not a continuation of the *Star Control* story, but rather a reboot or prequel. Legions of the game's fans (including this author) were eager for more information on the shape of *Star Control* to come as Stardock settled down into the early development stages.

When the story broke back in July, Ars approached Wardell directly for an interview. At the time, because the rights had just been acquired and planning for the new title had only just begun, Wardell didn't have a lot of information to share. Six months have passed since then, and the developers of the new *Star Control* have been very, very busy. Ars caught up with Wardell via e-mail and then over Skype, and he was happy to tease us with some new information about the title.

Talking with Wardell about *Star Control* was great because it quickly became clear that he loves the series just as much as I do—he even made jokes about frungy (which, as any *Star Control* fan can tell you, is the sport of kings). Moreover, it's clear that he's *actually excited* about being able to rescue the franchise from the dusty back catalog and pump new life into it. He's a fan who understands the series, and that will be the main thing that keeps the new title from veering off a cliff like [past development efforts](#).

### Consulting the creators?

The biggest question Ars had for Wardell, and the one I asked first, was whether or not *Star Control* series creators **Fred Ford and Paul Reiche III** would be involved in the development. The two designers spend most of their time these days on the wildly successful *Skylanders* franchise, but history has shown that *Star Control* without Ford and Reiche **tends to be pretty bad**.

Fortunately, Wardell was ahead of me—the Holy Duo has already been consulted. "I talked to them quite a bit about what level of involvement they would like to have in the new game," he said. "The main issue is that Toys for Bob is owned by Activision now, and as a result they cannot be officially involved at present."

This doesn't mean that their opinions won't influence the game's design—many of Wardell's answers indicated that the game is being developed with great respect for Ford and Reiche's unofficial wishes—and in such a way that if Ford and Reiche ever do want to step in and pick up on *Star Control 2*'s semi-cliffhanger ending, this new title won't interfere.

## Why Stardock?

But more on that in a moment. Stardock as both a studio and as a publisher is known more for **4X-style** games than for general RPG and adventure titles. Its name shows up on titles like *Galactic Civilizations* and *Sins of a Solar Empire*—games that have little in common with *Star Control 2* other than being set in space. In fact, the "space exploration RPG" genre is sadly unserved in modern times. With 4X Stardock's pedigree in mind, I next asked Wardell if that pedigree would influence the direction the new title would take.

"In our minds, *Star Control* is more of an adventure game. The new game is definitely coming from the same mold as *Star Control 2*," he assured me. "In terms of design, I don't think our 4X development really comes into play since we don't see *Star Control* as 4X. But we are very familiar with space-based game development, and we've assembled a team of *Star Control* fanatics to ensure that we stay true to the series."

We asked for more details on that team of fanatics, and Wardell didn't disappoint: "The game itself is being developed by veteran developers from Firaxis, Big Huge Games, and Stardock, whose engineering and art talent are amazing, but also know what a *Star Control* game should be like," he said.

## Into the future, or back to the past?

*Star Control 2* ended with the main character teasing the audience with hints of a much grander adventure to come, and Ford and Reiche's lack of involvement in the development of *Star Control 3* has led many fans to regard that game's events as noncanonical. Where, then, would that grand adventure take place? The answer is that Stardock's title will sidestep that question entirely.

"This has been a much discussed topic internally," he replied. "Since Paul and Fred can't officially be involved, we decided we would create a new continuity that splits off from the Ur-Quan continuity starting 250,000 years prior where something happened to the Precursors."

Splitting off an alternate timeline, says Wardell, gives series creators Ford and Reiche the ability to continue the "main" *Star Control* plot if they choose to do so at some point. "Morally, we just didn't feel it would be right to try to impose our vision onto Paul and Fred's sci-fi universe," explained Wardell.



**Enlarge** / Where indeed, Grandfather? We'll have to wait quite a bit longer to find out, unfortunately; according to Stardock CEO Wardell, the new game will be a prequel.

Wardell's *Star Control* would take place 43 years before the events of *Star Control 2* and would function as a prequel. "We plan to start the game around 2112 with aliens first contacting the Earthlings and the formation of *Star Control*," he explained. From there, the game will proceed in the same open-ended adventure fashion as *Star Control 2*—Wardell told Ars that the player would captain the Earthling flagship, which can be fortified with upgrades as it explores the galaxy.



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**Enlarge** / Stardock founder and CEO Brad Wardell.

## A little song, a little dance...

I had lots of questions about the actual *tone* of the game, too. *Star Control 2* struck a pitch-perfect balance between humor and seriousness—good amounts of each reinforced the other, and the game manages to invoke both laughter and awe. Wardell was quick to note that the new game's tone will mirror the old: "If you want to know the tone and style of writing in the new game," he said, "*Star Control 2* is the template. We will be making some announcements in the coming months regarding the writers involved that we think people will be excited about."

Presentation also matters, of course. *Star Control 2* was a product of the early 1990s and had a small amount of 3D art, but the majority of the background and in-game assets were hand-drawn and hand-animated.

Here, the new title will be thoroughly modernized—though the beautiful retro visual roots won't be forgotten. "While visually we are looking for something that will be amazing, the art *style* is going to come from *Star Control 2*," he informed us. "The new *Star Control* will be using the Nitrous engine that Oxide is developing."

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A video demo showing Oxide's Nitrous engine in action.

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*Star Control 2* had an excellent soundtrack consisting of four-channel sampled songs (**mod files**, actually) from a number of composers around the world; each species featured its own unique theme, and the music functioned almost as an extra character. Wardell again recognized the importance of sticking close to the series' roots with respect to sound and music, telling Ars that Stardock is "hoping to take the same strategy as *Star Control 2* did and work with the community as much as possible."

## ...a giant laser down your pants

For all of *Star Control 2*'s awesome space exploration elements, many fans' fondest memories from the franchise center on the games' ship-to-ship combat—specifically the player-vs-player mode, which let two players crowded around the same keyboard blast each other out of space.





**Enlarge** / Building a pair of fleets to fight to the death in Super Melee (this is from *The Ur-Quan Masters* —note netplay buttons).

Wardell doesn't plan to leave out what most players would consider to be a critical element of what makes *Star Control* be *Star Control*. The game will include "single-player and multiplayer" ship-to-ship combat. "We intend to make Super Melee a pretty big part of the game from a multiplayer point of view," Wardell confirmed. "It'll be an expansion on what was in *Star Control 2*, except we would like to support more sophisticated battle arenas and up to 8 players. We picture there being a lot of different modes for Super Melee, ranging from classic to *Dota*-style super melee."

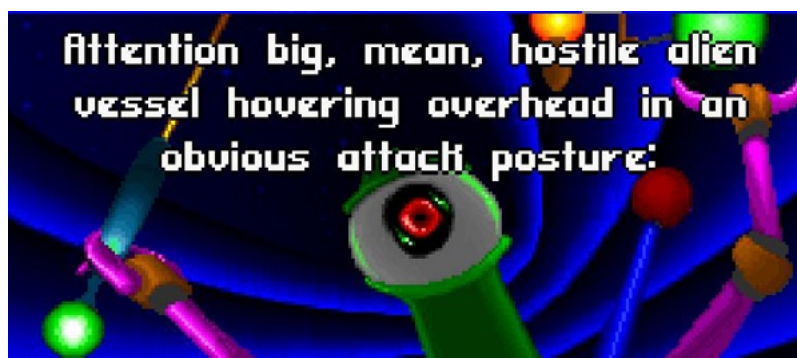
## And one to grow on

The future of the stagnant franchise seems almost unexpectedly bright—and Wardell aims to keep it that way, noting that rather than pushing out a single game, Stardock and the *Star Control* team could follow the game's release up with expansion models, adding in new races, ships, and plot elements.

As Wardell noted, though, one thing that the new developers won't be tackling is what happens *next*. Wardell and the dev team will leave the ending to *Star Control 2* alone and will confine all their world-building to the pre-*Star Control* era. "I too would like to find out what Paul and Fred had in mind for that," he responded when I asked about what events might take place in the post-*Star Control 2* future. "But I don't think we are the ones to tell that story. The future of the Ur-Quan timeline remains in their hands."

And what about some of the loose ends from the *Star Control* universe? The nature of the Precursors? The odd angelic/demonic dualism of the Arilou and the Orz, and the nature of the dimensions above and below normal space? The origin of the fabled Black Spathi Squadron?

Whatever answers are revealed, Wardell assured Ars that they will be true to the creators' intentions. "We'll be talking to Paul and Fred as we go forward," he noted.



Oh, Fwiffo. I love this guy. We need a game all about him and his (very safe, very well-protected) adventures.

## When, when, when?

As with all good things, *Star Control* will come only to those who wait. "We don't expect to even consider what a release date is until next year (2015) at which point we'll have a good idea of how far along we are," he said. However, unlike *Star Control 2*'s dual platform release, the new title will be available on a multitude of systems. "We do expect the new one to be home on the PC but also be available on Mac, PS4, Xbox One, Steambox, and any other platform that Nitrous supports."

In the meanwhile, Stardock plans to be a good steward of the brand and the franchise. Wardell told Ars that Stardock will continue supporting [StarControl.com](#) and its forums "so the wealth of fan fiction, art, mods, etc. will not just live on but will soon have an expanded home." Additionally, the games will remain on sale at GOG. Plus, the open source *Star Control 2* port *The Ur-Quan Masters* is also available—with all of its speech and updated music.

So don't be \*frumple\*, all you \*campers\*. After a long dark night and a lot of disappointments, good things are finally happening again in the *Star Control* universe.



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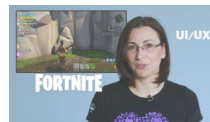
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## 10 things you might not have noticed in Fortnite



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